

In the Claims

Claims 1-20(Cancelled)

21(Currently Amended). A method of operating a virtual private network, comprising the steps of:

(a) ~~triggering performing a number identifier operation~~ on a virtual private network call by a service switching point of a first carrier;

~~(b) receiving a response from a service control point to a query from the service switching point; and~~

(e~~b~~) routing the virtual private network call over a private line to a switch of an intermediate carrier.

22(Currently Amended). The method of claim 21, further including the steps of:

(d~~c~~) routing the virtual private network call from a second switch of the intermediate carrier to a service switching point of a terminating carrier.

23(Currently Amended). The method of claim 22, wherein step (d~~c~~) further includes the step of:

(d~~c~~ 1) routing the virtual private network call over a private line.

24(Original). The method of claim 21, wherein step (a) further includes the steps of:

(a1) receiving a number at the service switching point of the first carrier.

25(Original). The method of claim 21, wherein step (b) further includes the step of:

(b1) sending a query to the service switching point.

26(Original). The method of claim 21, wherein step (b) further includes the step of:

(b1) receiving a plain old telephone number translation of a dialed number.

27(Original). The method of claim 21, wherein step (b) further includes the step of:

(b1) receiving a billing information.

28(Currently Amended). A virtual private network, comprising:

a first private virtual network in a first LATA;

a second private virtual network in a second LATA; and

an intermediate carrier routing a call between the first private virtual network and the second private virtual network when a service control point determines the call requires routing between the first private virtual network and the second private virtual network, wherein the first private virtual network is coupled to the intermediate carrier over a private line.

29(Cancelled).

30(Original). The network of claim 28, wherein the second private virtual network is coupled to the intermediate carrier over a private line.

31(Original). The network of claim 28 wherein the call is initiated by dialing four digits.